

Lawyer Referral Service Refers High-Value Medical Malpractice Cases

By Juli Vyverberg, CBA Legislative and LRS Director

The CBA's long-standing Lawyer Referral Service (LRS) continues to be an important resource for the public to obtain experienced and vetted legal assistance as well as an invaluable source of legal referrals for CBA members and non-members.

Recently, two separate medical malpractice cases that the LRS referred to Regina Etherton, Regina P. Etherton & Associates, LLC and chair of the Lawyer Referral Service Committee, settled for more than \$2.3 million.

The first case involved a single middle-aged female with no children who was admitted to a hospital for abdominal pain. A few days later, she died after suffering a hypotensive event. This case settled for \$1,375,000, for which the CBA received a check of \$68,750 as its referral dues pursuant to its rules. Another call received by the LRS that was referred to Etherton eventually settled for \$1 million, and the Lawyer Referral Service collected \$50,000. That case resulted from a delayed cancer diagnosis. The Association uses these monies to fund LRS programs as well as other CBA initiatives in our ongoing effort to make justice accessible to all.

The CBA's Lawyer Referral Service has operated as a public service for nearly 80 years. Member attorneys provide counsel in areas that include consumer protection, personal injury, domestic relations, estate planning, real estate, and employment law, among other areas of practice.

The LRS has more than 150 lawyers available who are exper-

rienced in many different areas of law and offer their services to the public. The LRS screens the initial public inquiry and matches the person with an attorney in the specific legal area in which they seek guidance. On average, the LRS receives about 2,100 inquiries per month, resulting in 100 to 150 actual retained cases.

On the third Saturday of every month, the CBA sponsors the "Call a Lawyer" program through the Lawyer Referral Service, making attorneys available to take calls from the public at no charge.

CBA members and non-members are encouraged to refer clients to the Lawyer Referral Service if a client's legal problem is outside your realm of experience. The LRS is also taking attorney applications to join the Service to obtain legal referrals. If you practice civil rights, consumer law, immigration, education, professional malpractice, or mental health law, we would especially like to hear from you, as our callers would greatly benefit from additional members accepting such cases.

"Joining the Lawyer Referral Service is a smart idea for any attorney looking to build or expand their book of business," Etherton confirmed.

For more information on the LRS program go to www.chicagobar.org (under Committees) or reach out to LRS Director Juli Vyverberg at jvyverberg@chicagobar.org. ■



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